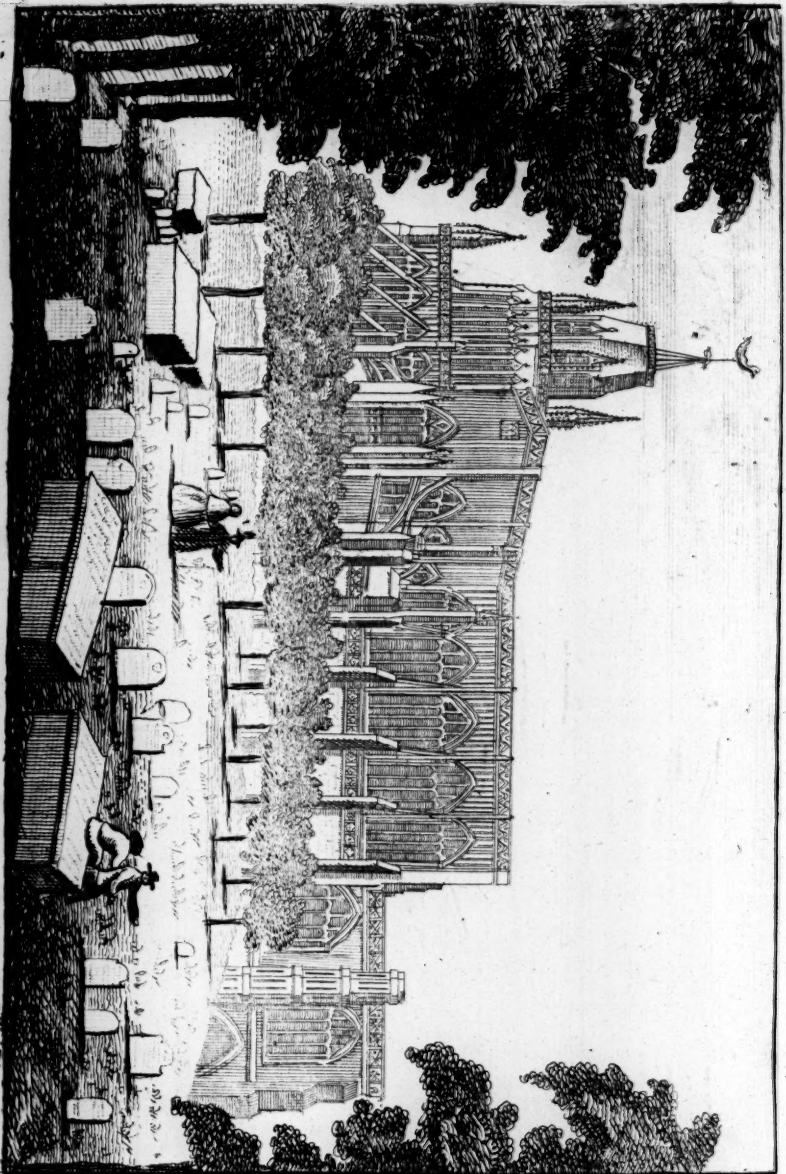
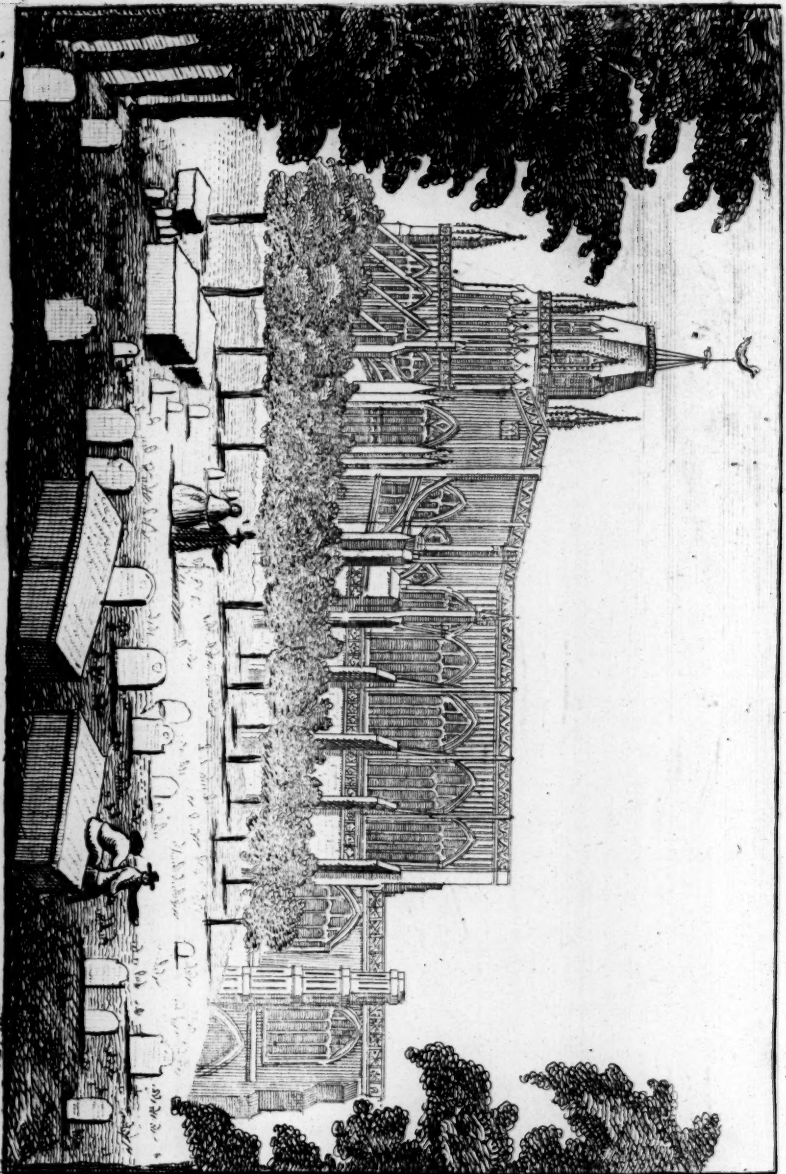




A VIEW of REDCLIFF CHURCH.
on the South side with part of the Church Yard





A VIEW of REDCLIFF CHURCH.
on the South side with part of the Church Yard



STRICTURES

Upon a PAMPHLET intituled,

CURSORY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

P O E M S

ATTRIBUTED TO

R O W L E Y,

A PRIEST of the FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Solventur Risu tabulæ; Tu missus abibis.

HOR.

With a POSTSCRIPT on

MR. THOMAS WARTON'S ENQUIRY

INTO THE SAME SUBJECT.

By E. W. Greene

*H. Greene
(E. W.)*

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. STOCKDALE, opposite Burlington House,
Piccadilly. 1782. Price 1s. 6d.

Chaos is come again!

Monthly Rev. Sept. 1782 p. 235

*Gent. Mag.
Nov. 1782
p. 253*

IMPROMPTU

On seeing some late incomprehensible STRUCTURES on Mr. MALONE's "Curious Observations on the Poems attributed to Rowley," and Mr. THOMAS WARTON's "Enquiry" into the Authenticity of those Productions.

MALONE and T. WARTON with one blow to hit [their wit,
And destroy all the force of their sense and
Lo! GREENE wields the pen with which
long he had scribbled, [Tibbald.
And levell'd old Pindar † with Pomfret and
In nonsense, 'tis said, that no fallacy lies,
For it nothing affirms, it nothing denies:
Yield the palm then, ye Wits, to this senseless
DRAWCANSIR, [answer.
Whom, writing till doomsday, you never can

† The Odes of Pindar, translated by Mr. Burnaby Greene. This gentleman has likewise published translations of Anacreon, Juvenal, Apollonius Rhodius, &c. &c. all of which may be seen at Mr. Birch's Pastry-shop (late Horton's) opposite the Royal Exchange, and at all the principal Cheesemongers in London and Westminster.



STRICTURES, &c.

THE * *Motto* adopted by our PAMPHLE-
TEER promises a writer abounding in exertions of the risible muscles; some traces therefore of pleasantry and of good-humor might have been reasonably expected; but alas! himself, no less than his ESSAY, must be acknowledged "HASTY;" the crudities of an over heated imagination in the CRITIC, have destroyed the candor of the man, and politeness of the gentleman: unpossessed of these qualities so honorable to the heart, ebullitions of the head lose their principal attraction. Well may an inferior tremble to observe the "modesty" of the great SCHOLAR, who hath in some degree given rise to the "Curfory Observations" stoutly impeached; and his VENALITY, a

censure

* *Ridentem* dicere Verum
Quid vetat?

HOR.

censure of which is set at defiance from every action of his life, arraigned through his *imputed* desire of "demanding an uncommon price" for his gratification of that PUBLIC, whom he hath so repeatedly obliged ! A taste for English POETRY denied to this exalted character ?—miserable obliquity of perverse insinuation !

* " The first and principal objection to the Poems, in point of their antiquity," arises, saith our Pamphleteer, from " the smoothness of their versification ;" to invalidate the efficacy of this remark, copious quotations have been inserted to authenticate the occasional harmony of rhythm in compositions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I shall in another place hazard reflections upon the *principles* of this harmony. Our Pamphleteer is loosely satisfied with the production of contrasted passages, *disproving* the subsistence of harmony in the poets of England, " during the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, when compared with the verses of the person, whom he sets down as author of " The Battle of Hastings : " If the first be concluded to have strained a point on one side, the second may not surely be acquitted of a similar *conduct* on the other.

Hypo-

* Pamphlet, page 3.

Hypothesis is bewitching, and we are *instantly struck* with the *form* of our Pamphleteer's Two Examples, derived from the exordium of *each* number of the " Poetical Battle," in the elegant array of modern type; while the numerous quotations from the *other* writers adduced are suffered in the rugged cloathing of the days, to which they owe their birth. This (whether designed or no) tends to carry back conclusion to a period of remoter antiquity with respect to many of the latter, and to bring forward the poetry of the former to a day too recent for the existence of their real author. Ingenuity may be luxuriant in conjecture, but " internal evidence" speaks loudly for itself; this stubborn authority must, when our subject is the brain of the Bristol Enthusiast, be absolutely destroyed, before our *Pamphleteer's* arguments, partial to its abilities, may receive confirmation. Quotations, with concern I speak it, are introduced by the *last mentioned writer*, in the worst and most irksome metre of the several ages, in which the compositions from which they are made were written: a flowing facility of metre might have been gathered from many a passage, and from a whole Poem of CHAUCER, stripped of his ancient venerable garb. These would be experienced to yield little to the melody of many modern productions, with
a cha-

a characteristic mastery of reflection, too often undistinguished in the latter. The older English Poetry, it will be allowed, suffers much in its harmony from the practice of throwing accent to the closing syllable of a word; a practice abhorred in the prose and verse of our recent language. Granting, that the Poems in question are not assignable to the age of ROWLEY, the authority of our excellent Spencer is sufficient (to go no lower) for a confutation of the principle, ascribing them to the Bristol Boy of the eighteenth century, *and to no other*. A favorite writer of Eliza's period hath been designedly brought to view on this occasion, his versification going hand in hand with his description, in a most expanded subject commanding full powers of ingenuity; while terms and phraseology give an immediate life of modernism to the whole. "Lines, and half lines," upon which to build a system, unless by precarious architecture, are more consistently discarded; but at the same time to suppose our stripling of ambition capable of "purloining stone from stone" from superstructures of ancient English, and of "*cementing* a new fabric with his" *bare* "artificial mortar," is to attribute to his scientific improvement an eminence unconfirmed by his history. Yet our Pamphleteer proceeds; determined to a question of the field inch by
 inch,

inch, and condescending in a trice to the "articular preface" of speeches in the "Battle of Hastings." Pope in his version of Homer's Iliad closes heroic harangues with "Thus he, he said, &c." the conclusion from these premises is, that Chatterton certainly copied such modes of expression. They are moreover understood to have been "employed by Dryden and by Cowley," but these stars of the literary hemisphere ceased to shine long before the eighteenth century: "*sometimes*" (well-played caution!) "the form, which" our *Pamphleteer* alledges, that "Chatterton used," *his* supposed author of the Poems ascribed to ROWLEY, "was also employed by Spencer and others."*

The consideration of Stanza may not be improper; it succeeds immediately in the reasoning of our *Pamphleteer*. The stanza employed through the Poem of "The Battle of Hastings, Number I," consists of decasyllables of ten verses to a Stanza; of Numb. II. the

* Is it a cruelty to remind our *Pamphleteer* of his assertion, that "throughout these Poems we never find a Noun in the plural number joined with a Verb in the singular?" He hath (page 57 of his pamphlet) acknowledged this error in terms that seem however to argue triumph in his defeat: I know not, that it is necessary to observe the peculiarity above-noticed to be a Græcism. The Bristol Boy was wholly ignorant of the language. Spencer furnishes Græcisms in abundance.

the same number of verses with twelve syllables to the line concluding the stanza. The "Tragedy of Ælla" is constituted agreeably to the former, no less than "the Tragedy" (as it is called) "of Goddwyn; the Balade of Charitie" comprises seven decasyllables to a stanza: "The Epistle to Maistre Cannyng includes six only to a stanza," and the letter to the same "digne" personage has eight. Spencer's Fairy Queen supplies in every stanza nine decasyllabics. If we remark the Poems attributed to ROWLEY on the one hand, and to the *fond* Boy of Bristol on the other, a variety of Rhythm manifestly abounds even in the decasyllabic formation. "Rithme Royal," our Pamphleteer urges from Gascoygne, "is a verse of ten syllables, and seven such verses make a staffe;" an original word, expressive of the subsequent stanza—a pause, or resting place, from which the Poet proceeded with additional efforts upon his subject:—but what just inference from this business of stanza? it can only be, that ROWLEY *was not*; by no means, that Chatterton *was* Author of the Collection. The attribution, it may be added, of "The Yellow Roll" to the labour of Chatterton, instead of ROWLEY, affords no argument, authenticating the veracity of the *former* assertions. It may be enquired, whether our Pamphleteer is positively *certain*,
that

that Prior first employed the decasyllabic verse in ten lines to a stanza? Memory may be refreshed, or inexperience stimulated to enquiry, by the question proposed.

"Imitations of Pope, Shakespeare, Dryden and Rowe" (the names are produced in the precise order insisted upon by our Pamphleteer) "abound in the collection." If Pope be confirmed to have been imitated by the author, or authors of these POEMS, a difficult struggle is to be maintained against the authorship of Chatterton, as far as relates to *them*: the truth is, that the plagiarisms concluded to have been committed upon the original Iliad by the strenuous advocates of ROWLEY are at once transferred by our Pamphleteer to Pope's, or to Chapman's * versions; the introduction of Chapman, as an authority, where Pope is concerned, creates suspicion; Pope's version of the Iliad is not more valuable, than more easily procured from a circulating, or any other library. It should seem, from the last mentioned pursuits in the opposite parties, that the contest

was

* Pamphlet, page 16: I will beg leave to notice one, without enlargement upon the other imitations adduced, page 17, that the two verses quoted from "the Tragedy of Ælla," are each extended to twelve syllables; is not a doubt thereby authorised concerning our Pamphleteer's late argument deduced from a consideration of rhythm?

was to be fixed, in the arguments upon this collection, on originals, and copies of poetical works in general; and this would prove a vague enquiry.

“ Apparent imitations” are asserted from our Dramatist, whose equal hath not yet been supplied. The imputed adoption is expressed in these words,

“ My love is dead,

“ Gone to her death-bed :”

Shakespeare’s Hamlet treats us with,

“ No, no : he is dead ;

“ Go to thy death-bed.”

“ He never will come again.”

The closing line is the burden of the Song in Shakespeare. Surely the expressions in each quotation are derived from the fountain of nature, and may familiarly occur to writers on a subject, admitting such reflection! The image adduced as imitated from Rowe was alike applicable in the age of ROWLEY and of ROWE. Who may now be represented to collect conclusions from “ morsels of lines and phrases?” I have already declared imitation to be attended with problematical evidence; it seems then alone consistently surmised, when an imitator’s predilection for the original, whom he imitates, is undeniably ascertained. He, “ Dean Milles,” saith our Pamphleteer, “ argues very rightly, that the whole of these Poems must have been written
by

by One Person :” the declaration suited the purpose of the latter ; but the Dean limits his remark to a total difference of life, disposition, and æra of existence between the Priest and the Stripling of Bristol ; a difference necessarily occasioning “ apparent distinction in their respective style, language, and sentiments.” The Commentator ascribes to one the collection imputed by Mr. Bryant to several.

No decisive stress may seem justifiably laid upon the *exceeding* imitations, asserted to have been made from the Iliad, in “ The Battle of Hastings.” ROWLEY’S acquaintance with Homer’s Iliad may be greatly doubted ; I purpose not to enter the list as advocate for his authorship of this Poem ; but our Pamphleteer’s prejudication in favor of Chatterton, as composer of the Battle of Hastings from one or other version of Homer in later periods, is altogether unsupported. “ Whenever,” adds our Pamphleteer, “ a single thought can be shewn in these copies of the Grecian bard, that is found in the original, and not in any of his English translations, I will accede to any proposition, that he” (meaning Dean Milles) “ pleases”—I suppose that he would be understood—any proposition, however absurd. It may be reasonably expected, that our Pamphleteer should admit the Dean to assert the same,

when " a thought, that is found in the English translations, is not observable in the original of Homer's Iliad, on the foregoing view of imitations from the Grecian poet: A fine preparatory to a remark, that the copies in " The Battle of Hastings from Homer's Iliad discover *some* circumstances existing in Pope's translation," of which but fainter traces appear in the original Greek. Ready I profess myself, once for all, to meet assertions, favorable to Chatterton's claim as to this, and any of the other Poems ascribed to ROWLEY, from a candid open display of passages from Pope's Works, be they original, or versions from the Mæonian muse!*

" Anachronisms abound in the modern antique compositions now under examination." So declares our Pamphleteer! The first of these Anachronisms, introduced by the last noticed gentleman, ascribes the " Art of knitting Stockings" to the age of our Edward

* Chatterton is boasted to have imitated (see Pamphlet, page 19) all the English poets, with whom he was acquainted. few, however, of these poets have been comparatively authenticated, as familiar to the *Bristol Urchin*: it behoves particularly our Pamphleteer to exhibit instances of his imitations in verses more unequivocally imputable to *his* pen, from recent poets of our country. Our Pamphleteer hath not favored us with sufficient examples of such *copies*; essential objects to corroborate his own immediate allegations.

Edwrd a the Fourth; on this doctrine, (I mean to prove it a mere dogma) the following reflections may be risked: the quotation is from "Ælla."

"She said, as her white hands white hosen were knitting:"—the word "hosen" is primarily interpreted "breeches," the invention whereof, though the "knitting of hose" hath been erroneously so imputed, has never been attributed to Scotland. Both "hose and knit," or more etymologically "cnit" are derived from the Anglo-Saxon, and from the figurative appropriation of the latter by Shakespeare, it may be concluded to have been long in use. Our Pamphleteer *approves not* a reference to this ancient language; yet the tenor of his argumentation compels a recourse to its employment. The real question however seems to be, not whether "knitting" prevailed in the days of Edward the Fourth, but in those when Ælla is estimated to have lived; a person necessarily comprehended to have then existed, being represented in the play to allude to such custom.

*The term "knytte, or knyte," we may recollect

* The Company of Stocking Knitters," saith Chambers, "established at Paris 1521, took for their patron St. Fiacre, who *is said* to have been the son of a King of Scotland." The establishment of a company implies no very recent experience of an art. Such is the legendary foundation of the claim as to the invention of knitting, arrogated by the rugged barbarians of the North!

collect to have been figuratively employed in "the tournament;" let the celebration recorded in this piece have taken place earlier or later than Edward the Fourth, the bladder of hypothesis, with respect to the origin of "knitting," bursts in the æra of Shakespeare, and conjectural deduction, that plaything of maturer age, vanishes into air; how great an interval before the birth of Chatterton!

On this, and the remaining heads of the anachronick argument, and indeed in his reasoning throughout, our Pamphleteer has rather borne hard against the claim of the Bristol Priest, than produced any remark determinately favorable to that of the Bristol Boy. "Bristol" he subjoins, "is called a city in these Poems, though it was not one 'till long after the death of Edward the Fourth; "city" in its primary signification is well known to have been a town incircled by a wall; which wall served the purpose of security against the insults of neighbours, or of a fortification in after-times, against an enemy invading from a distance. Our Pamphleteer interprets it in the partial construction of its application to "a town, which was a Bishop's See:" this definition of city holds not good with regard to several more considerable towns of England. "Gloucester is called city" in Domesday Book; Leicester has

has been chartered under the name of a "city;" Cambridge from length of years has been called "city" and "burgh" alike; and Ely hath been omitted in the enumeration of "cities," though a Bishop's See. Among the Romans *a place* sufficed to be a "city" to *which* many resorted, and where many resided together. The "legal" titles of burgh, town, and city, are now characteristically distinguished in the *southern* portion of our island.

"Cannyng is spoken of, as possessing a cabinet of coins, and other curiosities, a century at least before any Englishman ever thought of forming such a collection; oh! but!—" Mr. Horace Walpole," *subjoins* our Pamphleteer, "having a very curious collection of *pictures* and *prints*, Cannyng was furnished" *by Chatterton* "with a cabinet of *coins*;" the same idea is hazarded concerning the printing press of the "historic doubter" at "Strawberry-Hill." Cannyng is *thence* represented by the Boy to have "set up a printing press at Westbury." Painting "the representation," says Chambers, "of bodies in ducts, and draughts of lines, was restored to its ancient honors in Italy, towards the beginning of the fifteenth century; painting in oils, unknown to the ancients," was introduced "in the fourteenth." The examples last offered by our Pamphleteer are designed
to

to reconcile the right of Chatterton's authorship to the Poems ascribed to ROWLEY : if they serve to evince and confirm any assertion, it is the Lad's title to the appellation of continued impostor ; for which his name merits a stigma, from *honest reason*, never to be erased from its mind. The Spartan legislator allowed and encouraged theft in his growing youth, *provided* they purloined with that dexterity, securing secrecy to the plunderer. Unmerciful chastisement was inflicted on detection. This gentleman glories in behalf of the *thief*, at the time he turns informer against *him*, without a blush to pronounce the character a road to reputation. "Literary property," after a whimsical struggle for her first distinctions, now strongly entrenched within the fortress of law, *yet* shares a destiny unknown to *other* property. Thanks be to that law, the latter may not be with impunity seized, but the "tortious possessors" of the former have, in the present case at least, aright, as the first fortunate graspers, *provided* they maintain it by impudence and fraud. To speak fully upon "Cannynge's" alledged *collection* of coins," *the word* may possibly sound too high in modern ears, when applied to the fifteenth century : but as Cannynge might certainly, as it is surmised, have *collected* pictures and books ; why should coins be excluded as objects of his curiosity ?

This

This merchant of opulence, so greatly boasted, was furnished with the means of procuring coins, if not from abroad, through the channel of his commercial intercourse, yet more readily at home; a large proportion of this commodity remaining throughout the kingdom from the very departure of the Roman legions; without adding the quantity of coins exhibited in this country, during a series of subsequent ages. As to "the printing press at Westbury"—We are told that Cannyng purchased manuscripts; these he might naturally be desirous of publishing to the world. From no extravagant or *designing* representations, printed books are asserted to have been known 1430, and many were certainly delivered from the press fourteen years before the death of Cannyng. Caxton avowedly brought "the Art of Printing," most considerably improved, into England 1470, a declaration authenticated from the number of books, issuing from his particular impression; and indeed its exceeding utility not only to the communication of elegant knowledge, but its subserviency to purposes of more expanded traffic almost implies, that, rude and imperfect as it would not have failed to be in its origin, the invention had passed into England long before the days when Caxton flourished. The larger acquaintance of our country with the conti-

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nent,

ment, and the frequent importations of foreigners from most of its dominions, justify an opinion, that the English were not wholly ignorant of printing within a very short period of its first existence. On the more cultivated use of this most ingenious science may a remark be permitted? A less limited circulation of manuscripts thence prevailed, through a spirit of literary ambition more generally indulged; knowledge became widely disseminated; *the worse* than Spanish padlocks of monasteries and cloysters, which fixed the modest maiden in a drear confinement, were burst asunder, and the layman, a busy bee, disdaining longer to endure a deprivation of sweets, abounding in the hives of luxurious drones, snatched them to the gratification of SOCIAL TASTE.*

An

* Certain other Anachronisms are commented, Pamphlet, page 25, in his own modest word "decisively," to cast down ROWLEY, and place the 'wonderful forgerer' in his seat. What sort of "decisive" eminence his argument possesses to ascertain the title of the Bristol Boy to these Poems, it will be very difficult to determine. "Drawings in the technical sense of delineations with chalks, or Indian ink, are mentioned one hundred and fifty years before the word was used with that signification;" will our Pamphleteer hazard a positive assertion, that, drawing," on the less *finished* idea of "designing," was unknown in the days of Edward the Fourth? Are not improvements to be admitted in the *progress* of an art? "Painting in oils" was known in the times last mentioned, and drawing may be characterized her *eldest* sister.

“ An earlier fiction of” the Bristol Boy “ is a short poem of two or three stanzas, on the death of Richard the First, in alternate rhyme.” He sends this poem to “ Mr. Horace Walpole,” as having been “ found at Bristol with many other ancient pieces.” The learned gentleman signified, that “ no such metres, exhibited as *ancient*, were known in the age of Richard. The poem was instantly suppressed, and the stripling shifted the æra of his productions ;” but because no “ alternate rhymes existed so early as Richard I. Mr. Walpole meant not surely to assert, that no such rhymes were employed in the days of Edward the Fourth, for honest Geoffrey is a bar to such criticism ; though I would not be understood to pronounce any composition of the last to be uniformly carried on in alternate rhymes.* A plain deduction,

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duction,

* Where Chaucer treats us with alternate rhymes, one specimen of such measure is visible alone through a stanza of seven lines ; a metre enlarged from his example by Spencer to nine. When Prior is said to have first written ten decasyllabics to a stanza, instead of the odd number prevailing in the age of Chaucer and of Spencer, though no specific instance may immediately occur of such practice in ages before Prior flourished, it would be hazardous to insist, at all events, that no stanza of ten decasyllabics is attributeable to an English poet existing in an earlier period. Spencer not only added two verses to Chaucer's stanza above-noticed, but closed his stanza with a duodecasyllabick, or Alexandrine : and I see no reason,

duction, it may seem, from the foregoing conduct in the Boy, who was alarmed before he was hurt, is, that he was altogether ignorant of the state and formation of English poetry; and surely, in course, of its language in ancient days! Would he otherwise have been guilty of the sottish woefulness of fallacy, and have doubted on occasion of "Mr. Walpole's" sentiment? "Among the manuscripts, which Chatterton *pretended* to have discovered in" Cannyng's "celebrated chest" - in the Bristol church so often noticed, "was a painter's bill:* the same bill was faithfully copied" by the Boy, "from anecdotes of painting," printed some years before, and had been originally transcribed by Vertue *from* some old parchments (it should strictly run *an* old parchment) "in St. Mary Redcliffe's church at Bristol." The conclusion from this anecdote is, that Chatterton did not forge the "painter's bill" in question: though he forged not in the present case, he intentionally sought to deceive; if he sent this "copy of
of

reason, why the addition of a tenth line in an heroic stanza should not have taken place between the age of Spencer, and the more recent one of our "poetical Secretary of Embassy." The enlargement must have been strikingly familiar, when poetry was constituted on more genuine principles of harmony.

* Pamphlet, page 27.

of a true bill" to "*Mr. Horace Walpole*," it is plain, that he had never read that "writer's anecdotes of painting;" if he circulated it at Bristol alone, he must surely have been afraid to risque it even *there* before *less* distinguishing judges, as an invention of his own; at no rate, however, may it on any view of this business be concluded, that Chatterton had read the "Anecdotes of Painting," which many in Bristol must have seen, perused, admired, and remembered. The history of the "eminent artist Vertue may be of service to explain the enigma: His life, communicated with several references from "Mr. Walpole's lives of the engravers" to the "authors of the Biographia Britannica," describes him to have visited Gloucester 1730, or "about that time," when, though neither in this, or any other excursion thro' England he is represented to have visited Bristol, we may not safely deny, that he was at the latter place, from which he furnished his account of the "painter's bill." That a curiosity so alive, as that of Vertue, should be appeased by so frippery a register of intelligence, if he had possessed information of "Cannynge's chests," is not to be supposed; the truth seems to have been this: "Cannynge's chests" had been left open in the "tower of the church from 1727," just three years before Vertue came to Bristol. In
the

the last mentioned year "the papers relating to matters of this church were removed from the chests in the Tower, and separately deposited under lock and key "in the south porch of the same church." Vertue appears not to have visited the Tower," which the person, from whom he procured an inspection of the "painter's bill" had probably no inducement to intimate; the recency of the removal just noticed being no reasonable object of his suspicion, as to any value affixable to the parchments contained in the chests still remaining in the Tower: the chests and parchments were at that period equally unregarded, and the Tower itself may scarcely *otherwise* be esteemed to have repaid the trouble of access to its eminence. "Vertue's pursuit of every thing, that related to our ancient poets," may still be pronounced "*indefatigable*," but "his discoveries of ROWLEY'S Poems," or those of any writer at that time in the chests, be peremptorily denied.*

It

* The bosom of the Bristol Enthusiast seems to have been the rank repository of folly and of knavery alike; and though worldly fondness dignify the latter with the name of wisdom, it is in reality the usual concomitant of the former. He is very near proving himself a fool who studies to make fools of others. Detected by "Mr. Walpole" in the affair of the poem concerning "the death of Richard Cœur de Lion," he immediately "shifts the æra of this production, and of others:" this
is

It may be a doubt which is most unfortunate, our Pamphleteer, who argues the conviction of one forgery as legal evidence on a trial for another, or the Boy on whose latter trial such evidence is accounted valid. Oh! but!—"Chatterton owns, that he wrote the *first* Battle of Hastings;" oh! but—the Boy likewise prevaricated in that business to Mr. Barrett, no less than as to the "*second number*." Pity, that genius should require "a flapper" of refreshment to a *voluntary*, or other "doze of memory!" "Chatterton moreover owns, that he wrote the account of the ceremonies observed at the opening of

is knavish! but he forgets himself in persisting to attribute to antiquity "a poem upon the same monarch's expedition to the Holy Land," with a copious reserve of alternate rhymes: this is foolish: "*son metier lui echappa*." After all, I see not any reason why the verse

"Richard of Lion's heart to fight *is* gone,"

affixes the æra of the composition to the days of Richard the First, or why the eclogue, in which it is inserted, may be thence, or from any part of its subject matter, insisted as a composition of *any specific date*; *which* may be only conjectured from the application of those, versed in the progress of the English language, to its terms, phrases, descriptions, and to the general conduct of the performance; of those, unwarped alike by prejudice or prepossession. The poet addresses himself *in the person* of Nygell, whose father had joined Richard's expedition; the young man prays in the beginning of the piece for the happy return of his father, which had taken effect and is celebrated in its close.

of the old bridge ;” *was he* therefore author of the whole collection attributed to ROWLEY ?” *This account* could not have been otherwise understood, than as “ a copy” of the Boy, not his original invention ; for why on an opposite principle pronounce it the herald stimulating curiosity to enquire after ancient manuscripts in the hands of the same individual ? The erection of the Old Bridge was a distinguished æra in the records of Bristol. Let us hear no farther triumph of petulant sarcasm in “ the Story of Old Women” dragged as “ witnesses before a jury !” Our Pamphleteer may be consistently admitted in the former character, but cannot as consistently claim to himself the accuracy of examination requisite to constitute the latter.

We are now advanced to a consideration of the manuscripts themselves, and on this subject also we may ascertain the largest dealer in the “ gratis dicta” of argumentation.* “ It is very difficult,” saith Mr. Bryant, “ to know precisely the æra of a manuscript, especially when of great antiquity.” Our Pamphleteer pretends not his capacity to form a conclusive judgment of manuscripts, ’till “ the sixteenth century” towards

* Pamphlet, page 28.

† Ibid, page 29.

wards its close ; from all manuscripts, however, whether “ prior or subsequent,” he offers his assistance “ readily to point out the hand-writing of Queen Elizabeth :” farther, this deponent *insisteth* not. In my conception, the precise date of a manuscript is then alone to be ascertained, when the tenor of language is authenticated to a particular age ; this, while a language continues in its infancy, and variations are slowly made, affixes nearly its date from its distinction of character ; while in a fluctuating situation, and while fresh words are continually imported from other tongues, the gradation of refinement must be tenaciously watched ; and perhaps the surest clue in this stage of a language is colligible from historical records. The manuscript is congenial with the condition of a tongue, and with the peculiar dialect familiarized more directly to the writer of the manuscript. No proof has been yet submitted, that Chatterton was capable of “ copying the hand-writing of the fifteenth century ;” the reverse is strongly pleaded ; no proof that he possessed a turn for “ drawing and emblazoning ; no proof of any thing throughout the Pamphlet. “ The hand-writing,” continues our Pamphleteer, “ usually found in deed, is very different from the hand-writing current in the same age, and from that employed in transcribing poems : hence it was, that Chatterton

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never

never produced a parchment so large as a common folio :” a mock parchment, however, we are assured, that the Boy produced of that size to Mr. Ruddall, whose evidence will be considered in the course of these Strictures. Amid the different modes of hand-writing above-mentioned, Chatterton may seem, if we accede to our Pamphleteer’s representation, to have defied all surrounding difficulties. The “ account of the Old Bridge” was *probably* in the current hand-writing of the age, in which it originated; this, however, is by our critic ascribed to Chatterton: the “ Yellow-Roll,” usually attributed to ROWLEY, was as probably in the hand-writing of a *deed*; this likewise is by the same authority ascribed to Chatterton; “ the Poems” attributed likewise to ROWLEY, or to his age, if not written primarily in the “ current hand-writing” of the times in which they were composed, were not, according to the same critic, written in the hand-writing in use for *deeds*;—these Poems we find allotted to the genius of Chatterton! The * laboured story of “ the old crumpled parch-

* Our Pamphleteer refers to the various beautiful manuscripts of Gower and Chaucer, in several public and private libraries. It may be reflected, that he has denied any particular acquaintance with manuscripts, of a date prior to the latter end of the sixteenth century.

“ Whole

parchments, frequently observed to have been placed before" the *Bristol Boy*, serves only to confirm *his* disposition for hypocritical enthusiasm. Why did he not "show the manuscripts, while he was (or pretended to be) transcribing them?" why said he not, "such and such characters denote such and such letters?" why "called he" not "upon those knowing in ancient hands, to bear testimony from their own eyes to the antiquity of all these manuscripts?" He had evidently a design in these concealments, but will they be of service to prove, that he was the real author of the manuscripts? "Characters of imposture are on every part of" Chatterton's allegations, when unsupported by the testimony of others; and if the declaration of his having written the poems "were true" that trueism "would still remain an improbable wonder."* In *one* very reasonable wish the Pamphleteer may be readily joined by the staunch advocates for veracity; a wish to rescue literary traffic from the shackles of a monopoly; but the unpublished situation of *these* manuscripts in an original form may by no means be argued as evidence,

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that

"Whole verses" he maintains (in the cricketers phrase) to have been "trouled off" in these poems from Pope: he is welcome to his ideas of plagiarism so recent!

* Mr. Horace Walpole, from whom the words are quoted by our Pamphleteer for a contrary purpose.

that they have never existed. It were disingenuous to involve characters, appearing in the strict line of integrity, by a censure of combining in a miserable league to deceive and abuse mankind!

“ Chatterton’s verses, too smooth and harmonious for antiquity, are moreover too old for the æra, to which they are ascribed;” the language “ is the language of two entire centuries :” is the eighteenth century to be affixed as one? here we are supplied with an additional cargo of wonders! with every indulgence of “ glossaries, lexicons, provincialities of a northern, *unknown to a southern Englishman*; with words used in a singular sense by our ancient bards, and with “ all the stores of the most copious source,” comprehension to so formidable an extent is little reconcilable to the history of his education, the reality of his talents, and the abbreviated period of his existence: he possessed not, moreover, but in a very partial and contracted mode any one of the above subsidiary availments; granting, for the humour of the argument, that he possessed them in the full force assigned, his knowledge would have been thrown away from his vagaries of conduct in the invention of these Poems; why, in the name of consistency, fabricate the parnaassian structure of such ill-cohering materials, as to weaken its very basis? Chatterton’s appears to
have

have been a designing ignorance, scarcely attributeable to such exalted craftiness; The transcriber may be in fault, but not the original composer, for errors of this motley complexion:

“ Before the Urchin well could go,
“ He stole the whiteness of the snow.”

Thus is our Stripling all-accomplished represented to have mastered, after a dunciad-childhood, the old, and obtained an exceeding familiarity with modern English writers! “ The Tragedy of *Ælla*” is marked to have originated from “ the *Elfrida* and *Caractacus* of Mr. Mason.” Opinion revolts from the idea of *this* derivative excellence. The poetry conveys not a characteristic resemblance to the poetry of those dramatic models from Greece; the minstrels may at first sight be presumed counter-parts of the Grecian chorus, but our English traditionary records have a retrospect to the times of “ *Ælla*; a name,” which our Pamphleteer, loth to lose a sight of prepossession, asserts “ *Chatterton* to have *probably* found from Dr. Percy’s reliques of English poetry.” That idolatry of hypothesis, which he hath pledged himself to maintain, creates the veneration of a second idol, in a memorial of “ *Chatterton*’s knowledge of times, of men, and of manners, without which *Ælla* could not have been written.” Is such “ miraculous

lous ingenuity" determinable from the Boy's unquestioned compositions? What a fall is there!

"*The origin of the English drama* is prefaced by our Pamphleteer with Mr. Hawkins's account of "ancient interludes, the earliest of which was composed 1512." Therefore, maintains our critic, "Ælla must be pronounced a modern composition;" he means, that it must therefore be Chatterton's. Shakespeare * *about this time* enriched the stage, and has preserved his title to a distinguished character in the drama, even to the present times.

"Ye gods, annihilate both space and time,

"And make one critic happy!" †

"Erroneous

* About the time, it is meant, that our Pamphleteer ascribes to "the Drama," when it is pronounced to have been "wretched stuff," between 1540 and 1570: he may *perhaps* purpose to represent Shakespeare's muse of a modern cast.

† Chatterton is by enthusiasm asserted to have "exhausted the stores" of "ancient and recent English poetry," he must have likewise considerably dealt in investigations of our writers in prose. I see a rock upon which our Pamphleteer has split; his assertion attributes Chatterton's knowledge of "the name of Widdeville" to the source of "Walpole." That gentleman's "catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors" has inserted the name of Widdeville, instead of the usual acceptation Woodville. An instance hath been already adduced, how far the Bristol Boy was really acquainted with Mr. Horace Walpole's writings.

“ Erroneous interpretations have been given by Chatterton,” saith Mr. Bryant, “ of words throughout these Poems; he could not therefore have been the author.” A reasonable deduction, it may be *presumed*! but “ circular proof” is alledged against *that* critic. The Boy, according to our Pamphleteer, “ wrote not the Poems originally in their present form; he, *without doubt*, wrote his verses in plain English, *embroidering*” them himself with “ old words from memory, or from glossaries, and finding, or inventing interpretations and words *without doubt*” the greatest genius that England hath produced since the days of Shakespeare; *nay, much greater* than our great dramatist himself, when even the “ imperfections on his head” are made *solid* supporters of so flattering an encomium! But “ the glossary and the text were not written at the same time;”* thence “ the precise meaning of antiquated words, which he had” himself “ used,” was lost, and his “ confused collection” produced false “ interpretations:” this questioning of Chatterton’s abilities was to be atoned for, and our Pamphleteer instantly supplies an example of the Boy’s *extemporaneous* “ glossary to the English Metamorphosis.” A fine cutting two-edged sword! sharp indeed! his ignorance may carry the tide of argument to his prejudice;

* Pamphlet. Page 42.

dice ; his consummate quickness of conception shall be adduced to the counter balance of applause. That the glossary just referred to evinces superior readiness of talent, may be doubted from the mistakes with which that glossary abounds : after all, will Mr. Barret, at whose desire it was undertaken, and Mr. Tyrwhit, who assists in the information of the fact, positively convince us, that Chatterton had not studied, or obtained the same glossary to his piece before ? memory may have the appearance of a magician, but can never exceed the knowledge of its possessor : the solution however will not answer in behalf of the Boy's acquirements, or of his claim of authorship to the poems. Heigh Presto in the next paragraph ! " not six false interpretations " are to be found, " of words, which appear, when rightly understood to suit the context, and to convey a clear meaning." Wonderful circumspection of phrase, to the honor of the Boy's sagacity in the first, and *no less* wonderful proof of our critic's sagacity in the last expression ! These *perhaps* are amongst the " decisive circumstances," by which the Boy is clearly determined to " have written these Poems ! " they may with *the same propriety* be brought in evidence of our Pamphleteer's *assurance*, that he hath not *himself* assumed " the very question in dispute." *

" There

* Pamphlet. Page 43.

“There is often” saith a reprobater of Chatterton, “a material variation between the *copy* and the *original*. “He could,” replies his advocate, “have produced variations without end:” —from ignorance or from capacity? Our Pamphleteer argues alternately for the Boy’s distinction as to both. The variations in question are verbal; now that the same person should have in form delivered a manuscript under his own hand, with a *word* unknown in the language, and the “*very next day*” have produced a second manuscript of the same poem with the substitution of a different word in the very same passage, carries a strong suspicion of the writer: the Boy, however, exhibited the first *
as

* The verbal variation commented occurs in the Song of Ælla,

— “ a steed

“ I frayning o’er the mead.”

Such is the first-delivered manuscript! “yprauncing” was substituted in the second. However “fraine, or frayne,” is a Saxon word, “used,” saith Junius’s Etymologicon, “among the provincials of Lancaster, to express interrogate.” The Teutonick “fragen,” adduced by Junius under the same article, signifies “to incite, stimulate;” “fraine” seems more primarily derived from the Latin “frænum,” a rein. “Yfrayned” is, in my opinion, more expressive than its substitute; it applies to the skill of the rider, commanding the spirit of the horse at will, no less than to the situation of the horse itself.

“Neigheynge to be amenge the poynçelde speeres.”

The metre of the Song, from which the above criticism

as a copy, the last as its original. As a complete explanation of this proceeding, our Pamphleteer with complacency assures us, "that all the manuscripts produced by Chatterton were *equally* originals." A question may, for impartiality is to be honoured, be asked of the advocates of ROWLEY on the other hand! Had the Boy copied his *original* with the most finished accuracy, as far as the condition of that original would ensure it, would not his mode of hand-writing have evinced a sufficient variation from that in which the *original* was conveyed? had the same species of hand-writing prevailed in copy and original, would not imposture have been expressly determined against the Boy?—The *present* enquiry may not be closed without a due tribute to hypothetical enthusiasm: Once plunged into a difficulty, every struggle to emerge more deeply rivets distress: the load of Chatterton's deceit, little requiring an addition, is studiously exaggerated by our Pamphleteer, who asserts him to have "obscured" the last resigned manuscript "to give it an ancient appearance." *Obscurum per Obscurius!* we shall speedily collect the foundation of this sentiment.

"The
cism is deduced, in despite of all attempts to justify a contrary imputation, argues against its authenticity as a composition of ROWLEY's age: but why in course attributable to the Boy of Bristol?

“ The inequality of Chatterton's *acknowledged* compositions, when compared with those ascribed to ROWLEY, hath been much exaggerated.” *So sings* our Pamphleteer! “ Some of the Boy's worst lines” are wantonly, it seems, produced by this friend of learning and of candor: What superior excellence has Chatterton exhibited, from *his own* poems, to that contained in *his* lines brought forward by Mr. Bryant? It is not the fault of that gentleman, if the “ Bristol ambitious” has evinced his deficiency of grammatical, geographical, and literary erudition in his own language, and an ignorance of every period and climate which he treats: Unhappy, as his disposition, were his attempts to reach reputation. When he frowns in satire, he sluices the frantic torrent of slander; when he wishes to laugh, he plays the buffoon: eminent examples of “ premature abilities” in *any century*, affixed for their existence! *

“ Disfigure the ancient English with old spelling.” Spell the poems, ascribed to ROWLEY, as you please; the veil of antiquity thrown over them on the one hand will not protect them, as labors of the fifteenth century, from the detecting eye of criticism; nor the display of them in the comely dress of recent language facilitate their ascription

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to

* Pamphlet, page 45.

to the eighteenth century, on the other. He who has violated in his own immediate tongue every point, characteristic of compositions entitled to esteem, may not, without great allowances, (or rather deviations from sound judgment) be ascertained the author of productions in ancient language, which it is the first doubt of an examiner *in this case* that he tolerably understood.

Our answerer calls in an auxiliary, *partial* as himself, to confirm—what? “That genius and abilities may be brought into the world with us, but that nature cannot give a knowledge of the world.”* Yet this auxiliary insists upon Chatterton’s “so astonishing quickness in seizing every thing he chose,” that we may *nearly* ascribe his mental exertions to mere *natural* faculty; for, when this “astonishing quickness” is alledged to have distin-

* Pamphlet, page 46. Our Pamphleteer instances, in the foregoing page, the reasonableness of large allowance to the blunders of Chatterton, because a very elaborate and indisputable genius, “Editor of Fletcher’s Plays,” has committed a strange mistake, vindicating the errors of one by those of another, though a total defect of resemblance appears in the persons criticised! stranger still, when proper terms are discarded to make place for others less proper, as not so expressive, by the one, and when the error of the other by no means draws his abilities into question! most strange, that a solitary blunder, *possibly* arising from the former, should be esteemed a suitable comparison for legions, *glaring* from the ignorance of the latter!

distinguished him, he could have experienced next to nothing of "worldly knowledge," the "knowledge of men, of manners, and of things." He remained not a sufficient season in the metropolis for the mastery of this essential quality, and before he went thither a drear vacuity of "worldly knowledge" was his lot; for low artifice is no feature of this enviable acquirement! but our Pamphleteer seems to have adopted so fond a zeal to "be deceived," that he murmurs at a wish to develope the truth! He hath deceived himself by seeking to deceive his reader in the comparison of a Stanza from Chatterton's "Narva and Mored," that African eclogue is cast into old English, under the title "Chatterton in Masquerade," and the first eclogue ascribed to ROWLEY is delivered in present English.

"The verses he wrote for ROWLEY are *perhaps* better than his others, because they contain the thoughts of our best poets often in their own words?" What?—personating a writer of the fifteenth century the Boy largely borrowed from poets of the eighteenth, but in the verses, which were avowedly his own, he refused to avail himself of their beauties? A Lad of his boasted talents may rather be presumed to have reversed the plan, or to have been a plagiarist on both occasions: his

own

own particular performances stand in great want of such support !

Our Pamphleteer's help-mate upon this last occasion, the contents of whose passage, immediately quoted, subvert one favourite line hazarded by the former, namely the ignorance of Chatterton, is the author of " Love and madness ; a performance, giving rise to an epistle from Mrs. Mary Newton, sister of the Bristol Boy, written professedly "*as to a friend*" of herself and of her family.

" The time was much too short for Chatterton to have been the author of the Poems attributed to ROWLEY ; it would have been still more astonishing," is the reply, " if he had transcribed in the same time the same number of lines in a very ancient hand." He could have written them, that is on the former supposition of our Pamphleteer, " in plain English ; and then have written them over again, as " inventor," with the continual substitution afterwards of old English, in less time than he could have transcribed them, at one exertion, into the latter ! Chatterton's " inventive faculties" must indeed have been in this case as " wonderful," as the argument this moment urged in their behalf on our Pamphleteer's principle, which inverts the more *obvious* mode of ratiocination. The Boy's " London compositions within the space of four months ?" Will our critic *then* take it
upon

upon himself to avow, that every performance placed to the authorship of Chatterton within the afore-mentioned time, was written in the metropolis, and the positive inventions of the Boy in that abbreviated interval? What were these magical productions? as to the verses,

“ Fanny might spin a thousand such,”—

But they would be fitly inserted in no higher repository, than amongst the farrago of magazines; and, for the prose! miserable political squibs are pitiful, and unavailing passports to genuine literary reputation! I had nearly overlooked the very *judicious* “ *verbum verbo*” imitation from our great moral periodical essayist in Chatterton’s *novel* work, entitled “ Maria Friendless :” corroborating instance, it must be confessed, of his extreme *inventive* powers! *

“ Manuscripts of the fifteenth century in the Cotton Library are so defaced, that it would take no inconsiderable time to copy a dozen lines !” The condition of manuscripts, even though *precisely written* in the fifteenth century, it will at once occur, may widely differ: we must, to the misfortune of our

* I am indebted for this remark to Mr. Bryant’s communication through the intelligence of a “ young gentleman of Cambridge,” promising by this earlier effulgence another constellation in the hemisphere of letters. Mr. Bryant’s Observations, vol 2, p. 487—490.

our enquiries, place a principal reliance upon Chatterton's own testimony, when we collect his exceeding assiduity as to several transcriptions " of the Poems attributed to ROWLEY."

" Writings defaced and obliterated in many places" are therefore more difficult to be readily copied; more favorable still to the expansion of the Bristol Boy's abilities. Has our Pamphleteer forgot his late assertion concerning " these defacements, that in some instances," and he seems thence to argue the same in every instance, where such defacements may be observed, the Boy's manuscripts have been " defaced and obliterated" by his own intentional fallacy " to make an appearance of antiquity?" *

" The

* Though I cannot pledge myself to answer for the intellects of " an attorney," yet would I candidly intimate, that " the Solicitor introduced," for the purpose of being ridiculed by our Pamphleteer, page 51, " to the House of Lords," may *perhaps* not be altogether found guilty of unpardonable inaccuracy of expression. " A deed," saith this man of equity, " is illegible, but I will make out a fair copy of it." A deed of ancient date may " *prima facie*" appear illegible, but when examined at leisure, sufficient traces of its intelligibility may be transfused into a copy; however I am aware of the cruelty of depriving a gentleman of his pleasantry! some sweetness by all means be intermixed by way of palatableness to the sour! In conformity with this last principle the Pamphleteer shall be left to enjoy his jocular sarcasm upon

“ The miserable shifts, to which * our Pamphleteer is compelled to have recourse, by obliging himself to run full tilt against matter of fact !” and on not a single fact hath he rested a single argument of his Curfory production. “ Chatterton owned he was the author of the “ first Battle of Hastings, but we are not to believe his declaration :” † Why should we ? his first denial of it, and his subsequent prevarication upon both the numbers of that battle preclude our too easy faith. Such was his behaviour ; with his *imputed* reasons we have little concern : the Boy “ had got into a difficulty, and he avoided to get into a second ; that is, a prior was to be protected by a succeeding fraud. Whether this be a true representation will be most fairly adjudged from his “ information *the same day* to Mr. Barrett, that he had *another* Poem, the copy of an original, by ROWLEY.” Of *another* number of “ the Battle of Hastings,” it will scarcely be denied that he meant ; because “ at a considerable interval of time, he produced a second number
of

upon the *presumed* contents of “ Mr. Barrett’s History of Bristol.” Sarcasms, no doubt, intended to confirm the claim of Chatterton, and eke his own to ingenuity without example, and erudition without end. Pamphlet. Page 60, 61.

* Pamphlet, page 51.

† Dean Milles’s and Mr. Bryant’s accounts of Chatterton.

of the same poem, much larger than the former." This "considerable time" has been elsewhere called "*some time afterwards.*" The *other* poem we may reflect was asserted "the copy of an original by ROWLEY," the copy which was however, it is said, "*a true original,*" Chatterton is urged by our Pamphleteer to have himself composed, though the Boy delivered it as a mere transcript from ROWLEY. So that the first number of Hastings Battle must, if we accede to the Boy's closing assertion to Mr. Barrett, be set down as his own performance; and the second number as the labor of ROWLEY from Turgott. Yet "he who wrote the one" is insisted by our Pamphleteer "to have written the other." Mr. Barrett was left by the deceitful Urchin to correct the impression made upon him, concerning the authorship of the former number, by examining whether such a similarity prevailed in the second, as to induce his application of this last to the composer of the first. Who will from this picture of fallacy in the Lad entertain an idea, on *his* testimony, or on the conclusion adduced from his defender's premises, that "he was author of all the poems ascribed to ROWLEY?"

"We have the positive testimony of Mr. John Ruddall, concerning the reality of a forgery by Chatterton." It hath been already pronounced, that the Boy cannot without violence

violence to reason be conjectured to have invented "the account of ceremonies observed at the opening of the Old Bridge at Bristol;" he could but have copied it from some ancient memorial of that event. On what other construction can the general curiosity have been roused, from the publication of this account, to an enquiry after ancient manuscripts in the possession of the publisher? The Boy "*soon after* the appearance of this account told Mr. Ruddall, that he was the author:" *vix crederem, etiam si jurasset!*

"On an half sheet of *fools cap* parchment Mr. Ruddall saw Chatterton write several words, *if not lines*, in a *character* which he (Mr. Ruddall) did not understand; but says, that it was totally unlike English; that when Chatterton had so written upon the parchment, he held it over the candle *to give it the appearance of antiquity*, which changed the colour of the ink, and made the parchment appear black *and a little contracted*. Chatterton acknowledged to Mr. Ruddall his forgery of the account, &c. conjuring him *not* to reveal the secret."

To positive affirmations, but not to the constructive deductions of Mr. Ruddall, I would be understood to discharge all the respect, which his warmest advocates would desire, and his own character may demand. Mr. Ruddall saw the Boy write several words,

if not lines, on a parchment of particular size; he knows not a syllable of their contents, or meaning; but “ they were totally unlike English.” The proof that they were old English rests therefore on the veracity of Chatterton, at this very moment in the practice of a fraud. Mr. Ruddall, it must be granted, who “ continued his visit” to the Boy “ for three quarters of an hour,” may be concluded to have had sufficient time for an examination into the *characters* of the parchment; and the manuscript Poems attributed to ROWLEY, tho’ copiously interlarded with the ancient, furnish specimens enough of modern English, by which a gentleman of no refined intelligence might have form’d a judgment, that English was the language proposed to be described by the writer. Mr. Ruddall’s curiosity seems not to have been fully awake, when we consider the plea, which he is contended to submit, of his own unequivocal inexperience in the character of the words, *or lines*, written by the Boy. “ He” (the latter) “ afterwards held the parchment over the candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity.” This last intimation proceeded visibly from Chatterton, it may not be attributed to Mr. Ruddall’s own knowledge of the consequence to ensue. “ This appearance” was to be ascertained by “ a change in the colour of the ink;” to what different colour

colour from its former was the ink metamorphosed? *perhaps* the reverse of Ovid's mulberries, originally black, it became altered to white by this manœuvre :

“ Or like a lobster boil'd, the * *horn*

“ From black to *red* might *chance* to turn.”

“ The parchment appeared black, and *a little contracted* ;” *perfectly* resembling the contraction of antiquity ? Soft and soothing *Bathos* ! Such is the evidence brought into the court of solid criticism, “ decisively ” to evince the capacity of the Bristol Boy “ to imitate English hand-writing ! ” — What is the reason alledged in our Observer's Pamphlet, why the Boy “ brings before Mr. Ruddall ” the “ fools-cap parchment, writes words, *if not lines*, upon it, and holds it to the candle ? ” —

Put in the light, and then—put in the light. †

“ It occurring to Chatterton, that he might be called upon to produce the original, after he had avowed the forgery to Mr. Ruddall,” he endeavours to shelter his fraud under repetitions of duplicity. In this whole testimony we have no confirmation, that the Boy possessed abilities to copy the old English ; if the *opposite* construction is not suitably indulged, a surmise may be at least insinuated, that yet another fallacy is imputeable

* Ink horn.

† Shakespeare.

imputeable in this business to Chatterton. Mr. Ruddall might have satisfied himself, upon examination, that some of the words, written by the Boy, were absolutely English, an examination *very probably* not wished, or suffered by the latter.

Well! "but," we are told, that the contraction of parchment is no discriminating mark of antiquity, the blackness given by smoke is very different upon trial from the* yellow tinge, which parchment acquires by age, and the "ink does not change its colour;" I conclude it to be understood, when "held over the candle." What reply, Mr. Pamphleteer?—"So! because these † arts are not always compleatly successful"—but these arts are actually asserted *never to promise* success in the nature of things. Why Chatterton "did this," or why Chatterton "did that," our Pamphleteer may "weary himself with conjectures;" from Mr. Ruddall's evidence we are not furnished with authority, that "a *skilful antiquarian*, or even a careless observer, professedly not of *that* description, could be deceived by this species of imposture.

It

* Which the "*Yellow-Roll*," acquired by age; the above passages, "*inter cuncos*," are quoted by our Pamphleteer. Pamphlet, page 55.

† Id. et pag. eadem.

It has been whispered, that some "knowing one" in the business of these manuscripts continues comfortably seated on velvet in a corner; who surrounded with a confused din of facts, allegations, surmises, and deductions

"Smiles in the whirlwind, and enjoys the storm."

In a convenient season after these "equinoctial gales" are subsided, and a "settled calm" prevails, this personage may step forth arrayed in the majesty of conviction, and the whole structure of circumstantial criticism be dissolved, as Spencer's false Florimel of snow, when the true one appeared in sight. *

* Dryden.



POSTSCRIPT.

It is a very interesting and important
question, and one which has been
discussed in many different ways.
The question is, whether or not
the law of the land is the same
for all people.

There are many different views
on this question, and it is a
very difficult one to answer.
Some people believe that the law
of the land is the same for all
people, while others believe that
it is different for different
people.

Postscript.

—*Demo unum, Demo et item unum.*

HOR. EPIST.

“**A**N Enquiry into the authenticity of Rowley’s Poems” has been offered to the public since the close of the foregoing “*Strictures*,” its author is distinguished by peculiar eminence in poetical discussions; reprobating the idea, that the manuscripts, usually ascribed to Rowley, have been consistently so esteemed, he directly attributes them to Chatterton. Mr. Warton’s first object of attention is thus indulged; “if these Poems,” saith that learned writer, “are referred to the æra of Edward the fourth, the progressive improvement of poetical composition in the points of taste, style, and language, will be effectually disarranged”.*

A sentiment derived from that authority, which I conceive our Enquirer to respect, immediately occurs: “after Lydgate, who merited more from his language, than his imagination, came Hardyng, who wrote a
Chronicle

* Enquiry, Page 8.

Chronicle in verse of the English kings down to Edward the fourth, in whose reign he lived: but the poet is lost in the historian.* So frigid and prosaic a performance, after such promising improvements, seemed to indicate, that poetry was relapsing into its primitive barbarism, and that the rudeness of Robert of Gloucester would be soon reinstated in the place of Chaucer's judgment and imagination".

I would request to dwell a little upon the foregoing observation; poetical character must have been necessarily deficient, when a "Chronicle in verse" could be admitted as a sacrifice to the muses: difficult it cannot fail to be experienced to clothe the precision of records in the elegance of harmony, however assisted by the enthusiasm of fanciful traditions, those wild exaggerations of nature occasionally blended with the faithfulness of history. How difficult, even when poetry has received refinement the title of "Gazette in Rime" affixed to Mr. Addison's campaign is sufficient to evince; † and as to the degeneracy above remarked to have taken place between the writings of Lydgate, and of Chaucer, instantaneous

* Mr. Thomas Warton's observations on the Fairy Queen. Vol. ii. page 104, 105.

† Mr. Joseph Warton's Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope. Vol. i.

stantaneous as the exchange to corrector of language, reflection on the last affords a proof, that not a gradual step, but an extensive stride was made by the efforts of genius, which the condition of our language, apparently unfavorable, has been found capable to maintain.

Consistently to treat the subject of the Poems ascribed to Rowley, criticism must affix certain data, as grounds upon which argument may proceed. Evidence arising from the history of the parties should be either specifically admitted, or specifically rejected: where historical anecdotes are granted as authentic, deductions may not unreasonably be hazarded from collateral circumstances. If, for instance, the name of Rowley be conclusively ascertained, and history confirms the existence of such a character in the age, to which he is assigned, still is it requisite, that his talents as a writer be evinced. Should such acquirements be allowed, the nature, and subjects of his compositions should be procured; and the proof of their originality may not unsafely rest upon the performances, in a similar line, handed down, or recorded from the century, in which he lived. A wide extended field, where the *game* springs in too bewildering a way to secure the *sport* of a literary Nimrod; for if some of these productions remain, not few may

have been consigned to oblivion; and as so essential a *variation* hath been alledged in the *compass* of English poetry from the recent mention of "Lydgate, Hardyng, and Chaucer," why not apprehend the probability of strong deviation between the writer of these Poems, and others of his particular age? Poetry received a second almost instantaneous expansion in the labors of Spencer; an author, who familiarly conducts us to "our enquirer's" argument of personification * dawning in Chaucer, and brought to its meridian by Eliza's bard. This personal application to the virtues and to the vices formed excellent coloring to a picture of morality; why then should congenial attributions to "freedom, affright, power, war, and envy" in the boasted Minstrell Song of Goddwyn, be referred to a *recent* period? "but these are delineated upon too large a scale for the simplicity of a remoter æra;" surely not a larger than that, on which the figurative embellishments of the "Fairy Queen" are arranged! The Grecian chorus seems in truth too familiarly placed as the original of the English Minstrelsy; that this chorus was known in the days of Rowley may be greatly questioned, but Minstrel Songs were very naturally adopted into English compositions. Attendants on the active
and

* Enquiry, page 14.

and more relaxed moments of superiors, records delivered by the untutored music of their "sweet sounds" were congenial with the credulity, and flattering to the ambition of a warlike people. On the obliging favor communicated by Mr. Mason to the world, in "his dramas from the Grecian model," Chatterton's claim to the Songs of Minstrelsy in *Ælla* and in *Goddwyn* solely depends; a thread of too fine a texture to support the weight which it suspends! The Boy's "pretensions, however, to "a knowledge of antiquity" may by no means be esteemed "endangered by the excellence of the poetry," unequivocally "his own!"

"Old English poetry is a continued tenor of disparity,* not so much in the style as in the sentiment, while these poems have neither imbecilities of thought or diction." Our enquirer hath concluded it not inconsistent to moderate this compliment of zeal in the progress of his remarks, by an admission, that the author's "imagination is not always just, that absurdities" are obvious, and his poetry sometimes weaved "in a trite tissue:" but what avails argument upon the occasion? Chatterton's very blemishes are charged upon his opponents as substantial causes, why compositions, highly valued by those, who urge
the

* Enquiry, page 17.

the fact, fell from his prolific genius. Prodigy of parts! the idol, yet the sport of nature! not only, like Dryden's Zimri, "the epitome of all mankind," but more; though a Boy incontrovertibly dull till near the time he quitted school if a mother's evidence be credited, and *indulged* to the world, only *till* he became eighteen. "Too * good a poet" on one hand, "with a mediocrity of talents" on the other; and while *ever* "contriving some plan, by which his darling ambition was meant to be gratified, "found to have at bottom no contrivance!"

Thus whimsically circumstanced, Chatterton is resolved into "author of the collection," by that mode of argumentation most effectually tending to a defeat of his expectations. "Heterogeneous mixtures," and "incongruous combinations" abound in ancient English poetry; are the poems attributed to ROWLEY, are any efforts of human abilities, of *superhuman* in the character of the Bristol Boy, untainted with these errors of overflowing imagination? errors, which are frequently applicable to the manner, are as immediately chargeable upon the matter occasionally introduced "into the poems ascribed to ROWLEY." With the authorities of Gower and of Lydgate the enquirer hath
contented

* Ibid, page 20.

contented himself in his foregoing accusation of our older bards; their eccentric fallies are not so visibly intermixed in the humorous productions of Chaucer, nor fully they the more elegant harmony of chaste description in Spencer. Contracted situation served to narrow the minds of cloystered penmen; and as their religion was a tyranny of superstition, so their monkish writings originating in the frenzy of enthusiastic devotion were marked with harsher features of discordancy. Heathen mythology goes hand in hand with Popish legends; when a poem inserts the latter in their sole rational acceptation of traditional fables, the critic may be satisfied, that the muse hath been released from the monastery into life.

“ Verbal particularities” * may not be strenuously insisted upon: which shall be imputed to the inventor, which to the transcriber? Ancient manuscripts copied by a modern, unless a full competency of comprehension is his happier portion, will necessarily receive a tincture of modern terms: defect of understanding leads to conjecture, and where the unknowing conjectures, he is too liable to be lost; in the instant, that attention is warp’d from a direct view of the old, it revolts to present language. Verbal insertions,
however,

* Enquiry, page 23.

however, in compositions truly ancient, may not unfrequently possess an appearance of later periods; and candor induces me to attest, that, even concealed as he is behind the rug of antique phraseology, and a furtout of "black letter," many verses of humorous Geoffrey, who rescued our poetry, and our manners from the barbarism of ecclesiastical cells, struck me at first sight with their *recent* orthography; even *the run* of *others* distinguishes them with a cast of modernism; a modernism extensible to our enquirer's next deduction "from entire lines and prolix paragraphs;" * the production of which may create a suspicion, where assertion should be suspended, that a composition ascribed to antiquity may be esteemed the reverse. And here stop we a moment to pay a tribute justly due to the accurate arrangement of venerable "balades" by the ingenious Percy; from these, ancient versification, no less than ancient phraseology, if stripped of their weeds, and decorated with the finery of modern "apparementes," would be experienced to flow "smooth as the smoothest stream," smooth as the melody of Pope; how numerous those specimens of harmony, which boast an æra less modern than, at least equal to, the fifteenth century! where subjects are derived from

* Enquiry, page 23.

from the source of nature, language lends her most soothing powers to convey its dictates to the heart. "Contente" * is stiled

"Mayde of the turtle eyne ;"

This characteristic epithet familiarizes us at latest to the days of Spencer, and the "eye of the turtle" may more particularly be questioned on the conclusion of modernism, when we refer to that exquisite sentence of oriental melody, so admirably transfused from the Psalmist into our version, "Oh ! deliver not the soul of thy *turtle dove* into the hands of his enemies !" why † truth should not be esteemed suitably complimented in older days, under the character of "faire saincte," I cannot conjecture ; neither indeed is it reasonable, that a moral quality, so exalted as truth, should endure a refusal of such title, bestowed every hour by popish artifice and absurdity upon beings, which either never existed, or existed to the disgrace of society : if, however, the saintship be with some impropriety thus applied in the fifteenth, truth may surely be allowed to have been consistently so gifted long before the eighteenth century. ‡

"Metre"

* Enquiry, page 30.

† Ibid, page 30.

‡ Native asperities," say the advocates of ROWLEY, "have been softened by a modern corrector;" if this
corrector

“ Metre” is our Enquirer’s second consideration ; pindaricks involved by a wild luxuriance in paraphrases or imitations, for they are not translations less early than the attempts from “ the Bard of Thebes,” call them what you will, by Cowley, may be negatived as productions of “ the fifteenth century ;” in which such a writer seems not to have been heard of by the English : on the other hand, because “ the thing, which we call an ode,” and which in modern estimation seems little to argue *determined* composition, subsisted not from Grecian authority in those ancient days, shall we thence conclude that *description*, evidently brought into poetic life previously to the æra ascribed to ROWLEY, was not thrown into a lyric form ? The truth is, that odes, call them balads, call them songs, call them poems, without the metre of *heroick* complection, displayed the lyric spirit in very early times. Metre must speak

corrector is set down as Chatterton, we may reflect, that these same gentlemen have found him guilty of adding by his ignorance to the asperities inherent in the text, according to its general tenor : instead of correcting he must rather be understood to have corrupted his original ; for the “ silk” of Spencer himself darned by

“ Chatterton’s officious aid,” quickly discovers the thread employed in the repair to be “ worsted.” Enquiry, page 31.

The above remark bears still more effectually against the originality of Chatterton.

speak for itself in the species of composition
 now remarked, and on this many assertions
 may be made, though few, if any, are to be
 proved, against its existence in days remote
 from those of Chatterton. "If ROWLEY,"
 saith our Enquirer, "was acquainted with
 Pindar, he has borrowed nothing from
 the Theban bard, but the licentious exube-
 rancy of his lyrics;" that is, as an experi-
 ence of Pindar will most consistently evince,
 nothing actually possessed by his genius, if
 we may judge from his surviving odes; but
 was Chatterton a Pindar?—as greatly as he
 was a Mason. The metre of "the Song of
 Ælla" is wild, the thoughts by no means
 concentered, and the close abhorrent from
 every idea of connection; the whole last
 Stanza jejune and spiritless; little arguing
 the feelings of Chatterton, who had strongly
 worked himself into habits of abuse against
 Bristol, and its parsimonious rewarders of
assumed merit.

As uniform regularity, and metrical dig-
 nity have been adjudged to the author of
 these Poems by the advocates of Chatterton,
 he may with less propriety be allowed to have
 indulged "dancing vagaries." Majestick as
 his usual tread in "the buskins and the
 greaves," an author may choose sometimes
 to laugh, or be pleasant in "the tragick,"
 or the epick. Here our Enquirer rebukes the

metrical *exchange* alone. "Double rhimes" are particular objects of censure, as arguing modernism of date. In Chaucer what is pronounced "*accidental*" is attributed, as to the author of these Poems, to *design*. The occasion of * our Enquirer's criticism is, "a Minstrel Song," ascribed to Sir Thybbotte Gorges," certainly conveyed in a measure essentially varying from the residue of the composition, into which it is inserted: others are left to consider, whether it is *hitched* into the performance: at any rate, † generally argued, the "double rhimes" employed by an earlier poet justify its less modern construction, as *metrical originality* may not in this instance be alledged. It may appear a subject mete for surprise, that "our Enquirer" hath not rather adverted to the authority of this same Chaucer on the present occasion in favor of Chatterton's right to these Poems, since he adduces in the course of his remarks "Speight's Glossary of that Poet,"

* Enquiry, page 37.

† I would request permission to quote a *Stanza* in the "Minstrel Song of Ælla," which I have already criticised as to a portion of its contents:

"As Elynoure bie the grene leffe was syttyng,
 "As from the fone's heat she tarried;
 "She sayde, as her whyte hondes whyte hosen were
 knyttynge,
 "Whatte pleasure ytte ys to be married!"

Poet," as the Boy's principal resource in *his study* of ancient English.

The "structure of the Stanza" might have been originally derived from Lydgate, whose lines in the following quotation, however hobbling, may be pronounced to convey a careless facility, suitable to the unadorned period in which he lived :

" I mean as thus, I have no fresh licoure
 " Out of the conduites of Calliope,
 " Nor for Clio of Rhetoricke no stoure
 " In mie labor for to refreshe me."

Why should not "the Minstrel Song in Ælla" have been an invention almost as early as the well known original of "Henry and Emma?"

"Polysyllabick terminations" of verses were a characteristic fault of the "ancient poetry;" a sentiment imputed to Chaucer's practise of "Latin and exotic terms;" till the days of that "Father of English poetry," monosyllables "froze the genial current" of our language. Why must the author, or rather authors of these Poems, be excluded from "verbal imitation" of bards, preceding the age of Chaucer? and for the more tuneful melody of verse be indebted to improvements more recent, and to his or their own excellence of taste? "Polysyllabick closes" are too liable to cast an air of debility on lines, though

though they may not be deemed untowardly defective in musical tone.* The polysyllabick termination is likewise in a degree attributed to "Italian importations;" these certainly must be understood to have refined the sounds of the English voice, one vowel familiarly opening upon another to soften words of this prolix construction: be that as it may, our "old new epic pastoral" writer uniformly almost rejects this "heavy cavalry" of terms; and why not, though its use continued to the period of "Fairfax?" a critic, who insists not the origin of these Poems to have taken place in "the fifteenth century," needs not to be solicitous for the subsistence of polysyllabicks in days less ancient than that æra; the last remains of their appearance in English poetry may be fixed even to a more recent time than that of Fairfax: it is evident after all, that Spencer's application to such closes of his lines arose not from any idea of their utility in point of modulation; neither may they be construed characteristicks of his muse; they seem to have been intentional sacrifices to his predecessor Chaucer, but sensible as his knowledge of harmony had made him, that polysyllabick appropriations were very liable to obstruct it, he hath banished from "the slow length of words"

* Enquiry, page 39.

words" every coarser consonant, and thrown *them* as much as possible into vowels. Tho' the metre of "Robert of Gloucester," a bard, or, as our Enquirer prefers, a versifier of the eleventh century at its beginning, pretends to no elegance, yet his selection of words to the immediate structure of his verse, in many instances, diverts that harshness, which in a language "abounding," as an eminent judge and example of poetry has announced, "too much in monosyllables, is apt to prevail: the metre "of Robert" was the vice of his age; and his rudeness is not imputeable to his *syllabick confinement*. "Ancient language" is our Enquirer's third consideration; and can he, *qualified* to write the Poems, be concluded to have arrayed his muse in the motley vestments of an harlequin? As a transcriber, his errors of gross contexture may be accounted for, but to cover the gold of a fifteenth century with the cobwebs of a thirteenth was ill-suited to resources necessarily possessed by a real author of the collection: his precedents for words never held in use; "his indiscriminate haste, ignorance of dialect," and factitiousness of diction are so many direct confirmations not in disfavor of his transcription, but greatly of a probability, (shall I be admitted to urge possibility?) of his authorship.

In

In Chatterton's "want of knowledge, as to the antiquity of words," our * Enquirer agrees with Mr. Bryant, yet submits very different principles for that deficiency: ignorance may be alledged a more satisfactory shelter for the character of a copyist, than for that of an inventor: yet system is a mere cudgel-play of argument; much may be plausibly warded in its defence, and many blows may be aimed on the contrary to its destruction. Our Enquirer's reasoning on *this head* contains the following propositions: That a "literary forger," with more difficulty to be detected, should never know the meaning of the author forged;" that he should be unskilled in the application of words, which he "finds it requisite to adopt in support of his forgery;" that his "natural expression should be obstructed: that he should be obliged to embarrass a meaning at first clear, and puzzle himself and his readers." These conclusions naturally spring from our Enquirer's premises, unless it be insisted by a mode of proof, whimsical as was the Boy himself, that he purposed to promote detection, while he was designing a fraud. When the "experimental verses," which formed the outset of his fallacious career, were adjudged no originals, the Boy awhile resigned himself to the practice

* Enquiry, page 46.

practice of the like conduct among Bristol¹ friends, which was not endured in the more impartial metropolis; his next gradation was to deceive as a copyist, in turn resuming his claim to originality, as to "the Poems ascribed to ROWLEY." It may "be observed by way of close to this article of enquiry, that the instance * of "master ordering scholar to bring an exercise in Chaucer's style" bears hard against the consistency of master, if scholar was confessedly incompetent in point of experience in "the old English;" but that experience once known by master, and "the exercise delivered by scholar," if the latter could not explain it, would not the former very reasonably doubt, that it was his scholar's composition? Where system is not placed as a stumbling-block in his way, an answerer, justifying the pædagogues, must resolve the question in the affirmative.

Our Enquirer's fourth head comprizes "historical allusions:" the following remarks may suffice on this subject: "the raven standard of the Danes! how," it hath been asked, "could Chatterton have gained any knowledge of it?" I am afraid, that the answer,

* Enquiry, page 60; Mr. Bryant urges, that "if a boy produces a reputable exercise, and cannot construe it, there is not an usher in a boarding school but will tell him he did not make it."

answer, expressing his intelligence to have been derived from "Thomson's Masque of Alfred," will be reasonably esteemed *presumptive*! why not rather conclude the Poet, if really attributed to the eighteenth century, to have rummaged, *like his beloved Shakespeare*, the refuse of less valued, or never valued, books, for poetical materials? Ample authorities of very early date may be collected for the instruction of a poet in the fifteenth, or any other century before the tardy progress of the eighteenth, in the point of the Danish standard." When the same "moral writer of the Seasons" introduces the name of "Hubba, as a Danish prince," and this is chang'd into Hurra, the warmest advocate for the change cannot pretend to account for the reason, by adjudging the Bristol Boy a reader of Thompson to such extent, that plagiarisms may be announced from that quarter: Chatterton would be the very first person to whom *such* perverseness of critical erudition hath been applied! Though the Boy be not admitted to have discovered original poetry in "the Tower of Redcliffe Church, Bristol," yet is it granted, that he "might have there discovered parchments of" humble "prose,* relative to the antiquities of that church, and other buildings of the town:" but whence the

* Enquiry, page 65.

the propriety of assigning the Boy's invention to the former, and his mere transcription to the latter? "the prose antiquities have," it seems, "been verified!" the poetical have been so unfortunate as to continue unauthenticated. Is this the foundation of their being attributed to the fancy of the Bristol enthusiast? On a view of this *argument*, as connected with his history, and with many circumstances of "positive evidence," nor less, when considered from its own separate validity, the very reverse seems strongly to be implied.

"Incidental circumstances * in the Battle of Hastings could not have been derived by Chatterton, to whom the books were not accessible, from conformable representations in William of Malmesbury, and the old Latin chroniclers." A deduction with equal consistency referred to Chatterton's incapacity of understanding them, had he possessed such access. "These incidental circumstances" our Enquirer insists to have "descended into later historians, particularly Hollingshed, Fox, and Stowe, to which Chatterton got access. Fuller, "the church historian," is moreover alledged as his direction; † and, if used by the Boy, may be esteemed a source of supererogatory intelligence, "all the rolls and catalogues from the three foregoing wri-

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ters

* Enquiry, page 67.

† Ibid, page 71.

ters having been drawn together, and comparatively arranged by the *last* elaborate pen. As we have already observed in what sense of the term Chatterton has been stiled a reader of Thompson, it may be more familiarly collected that he was probably in the same degree a reader of the above *extensive* historians. The time he existed

(" Hunc tantum terris ostendunt fata" may be a characteristick motto for our literary Marcellus) *most satisfactorily* accounts for his acquirement of knowledge ecclesiastical and civil, for his compositions poetical and prosaick, and his acquaintance from parchments with Bristol anecdotes and events, which it is *not sufficient* objection to *prove*, that he could scarcely understand ! That the early period of " the English chroniclers" adduced, should be urged, as a convincing reason, why " the Battle of Hastings" was not composed 'till the eighteenth century, claims *as solid* a right to our persuasion.

" Turgott," saith Dean Milles, " pointed out in the Battle of Hastings the origin, and use of Stone-henge : this pile of stones hath been the foundation of romantic structures" at least ! The lines concerning it run thus :

Neither

" Herewarde, borne on Sarim's spreddyng plaine,
 " Where Thor's fam'd temple manie ages stode ;
 " Where Druids, aunciente preefts, did rytes ordaine,
 " And in the middle shede the vyctyme's bloude,
 " Where aunciente bardis dyd their verses synge
 " Of Cæsar conquerde, and hys myghtie hoste ;"

“ Neither the birth, nor any part of Herewarde’s History,” saith Dean Milles, “ comes authenticated by other writers, or agrees with the account of that Herewarde, highly celebrated by Ingulfus and other historians :” but a poet, versed in English history, who was at the same time skilled in the conduct of ancient epick poetry as a scholar, may readily be imagined to have substituted additions to a character of *Saxon* origin, in favor of some patron, or friend, whom he was zealous to applaud. Thus the physician of Æneas was no other than the physician of Augustus; the Mnestheus, a complimentary source of the Memmian family, and Achates the true Mæcenas of Virgil’s days. The description of “ Stone-henge” is agreeable to traditionary fable; the idea of a druidical temple was flattering to the vanity of those, who descended from the ancient Britons; here genuine history seems reversed, for, if resolved into an edifice, Stonehenge may be rather presumed a temple raised by Roman ostentation; from the preservation of their “ superstition,” the maintenance of their “ authority” was secured. Monuments of their devout enthusiasm were left in every portion of the globe, traversed by their arms, as monuments of their conquests: such extensive reliques little evince a structure by the hands of barbarism: the tale of its
erection

erection, as a perpetuation of Hengist's massacre, was a sacrifice and no more to popular antipathy against the Danes. But the reader may have been too long detained from the great principle of Chatterton's claim! "Of the Normans the Boy had a list of eight hundred, of the Saxons he took *only twenty*: but why the Boy? the disparity of names inserted in "the Battle of Hastings" might have arisen from a mere disposition of the Poet (and the political distinction of Norman and Saxon had *not* evaporated till after the *Scot* assumed the throne of England!) to picture the Normans profusely destroyed by an handful of Saxons. The adoption of Saxon interests by our Bristol Boy may not be justified from the experience, that when distinctions have been blown away by the breath of time, he who *reads* an historical record of national, civil, or individual enmity, feels a warp to the espousal of one party, of whom he uniformly wishes the success. The Boy is, however, announced to have "taken his few Saxon names" from plays, novels, histories, and other books of entertainment;"* some of the *seventy*, which he assured his particular friends, that he had *investigated*, though the publick hath not yet been favored with *their list*; Shakespeare's
true

* Enquiry, page 72.

true source of information, which, it has been expected, we should see transferred to Chatterton! why not many Norman names from the same *entertaining* origin? — but I recollect, that he was happy in “other *domesday* books” to *consult* for the latter!

The “necromancy of Tynian, the goats of Conyan made tame, the souls of the fairy-stricken people, wandering to Offa’s dyke, are occult intelligences sprung from Chatterton’s imagination.” * Surely not Tynian, for “he is mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth;” a retailer of fabulous absurdities with a seeming fullness of belief in their contents. “Fairy-stricken people are even now remembered;” for these the Boy was assuredly indebted to “Mother Goose’s Tales,” or to the crazy tales of her legitimate descendant “Ossian the Son of Fingal.” Our Enquirer proceeds; “these fictions could not have fallen from an archdeacon, a prior of an episcopal church, and a conscientious annalist, or have been introduced into the grave dignity of an historical detail:” these details it is the province of an epick poet to season with fancy; Turgott is out of the question, but let any “archdeacon, bishop, or conscientious” man sit down to write, or if too *solemnly* disposed for writing, be *pre-vailed*

* Enquiry, page 74.

vailed upon to read an epick poem, and he will acknowledge fiction to be its very soul ; it must not indeed be indulged to the violation of events universally received into the world, and with this exception he may not place fabulous representation to the disparagement of its writer's " conscience," or consistency, or even of his more serious reflection, in which he must largely deal in proof of his title to the epick character. Fiction is inherent in the genius of this composition, as a species of episode in itself ; and the poet of " the Battle of Hastings" treads too securely over this enchanted ground, thinly scattered with the ashes of antiquity, to promote an opinion, that it is the walk of a master " in his teens."

But the " Battle of Hastings" is more specifically an object of " our Enquirer's" meditation in his *fifth* range of argument : imitation is its corner stone. The possible acquaintance of ROWLEY with Homer's Iliad is certainly of " questionable shape ;" and it is observed, that the " prolix circumstantial comparison existed not 'till the days of Spenser ;" nor may it be denied an ornament to poetry constituted upon principles of elegance more refined.

" Chatterton had access to English translations of Homer ;" so that critics are not absolutely

absolutely condemned, who have argued imitations from that exalted authority of Greece in the poem of Hastings. "Kenelwalchae's beauty" hath supplied inundations of "similies," and these argue "a Boy fond of the florid and the descriptive, unable to check his fanciful career:" numerous the similies, but no boyish incoherence, no luxuriance of unbridled imagination struck me, as I perused them: Spencer traffics in these graceful prolixities; * why then attribute them to the wantonness of a *trifler's* muse? the regularity and decorum, marked in this poetic range, would by *such* have surely been removed for the disturbed affectation of metaphorical mixtures! Want of gallantry in monastic ranks is but an inconclusive plea for commanding the hazardous *leap* of a writer at once from "the fifteenth to the eighteenth century!"

The "Tragedy of *Ælla*" remains to be considered on this head of "our Enquirer's" work; this the most valuable composition of the Poems, ascribed to ROWLEY, would be no disgrace to the best collection. "The fable is opened, and the catastrophe produced according to the prescriptions of Aristotelian severity." Of this performance less genuine information through the channel of Chatterton's history may be obtained, than of almost, if not altogether, any other: this
regularity

* Enquiry, page 79.

regularity of the Poem is adduced "against the probability, that it was written by ROWLEY;" an opinion justified from anecdotes of our ancient stage. Shakespeare's undeviating conformity with *Grecian* dramattick hypercriticism may not be pretended, yet "the miserable interludes" of his own century exist not in his distinguished pages. Insufficiencies of Chatterton have been insisted upon, as foundations for his claim of authorship as to the other Poems; his extreme sufficiency is urged by his advocates for his title to the "Tragedy of *Ælla*." Totally unacquainted with the school of Greece, the genius of *Mr. Mason* stands forth his protector, contented with a *rival* in a froward Boy of sixteen, *where* he has himself raised altars to his own immortality. Magical powers of contrast, when will your wonders cease? Not a compliment to poetick eminence of acquisition alone, its enlargement rises to "judicious criticism and pleasant raillery, in neither of which is he inferior to Pope." The "Dean of Exeter" had alledged such specimens of ROWLEY's abilities in the Epistle to Canynge:" an "unlucky concession," saith our Enquirer; "unlucky" enough in a respect which he did not propose, for Pope is not to be regarded as a man of "pleasant raillery;" neither is the distinction applicable to "the worst natured muse" of the Bristol Boy; to whom, if "judicious criticism" is seriously ascribed as a possession, his own unquestioned perform-

performances furnish ample matter, upon which the exercise of *that* talent might have been copiously bestowed. Little stress may be laid on Chatterton's *imputed* dissoluteness of manners, to evince his defect of title to a Poem, in which lessons of morality occur; they who *act* upon wrong principles have a capacity to *think* upon right; and a critick is very liable to be deceived, who argues the character of the man from the conduct of the writer. *Vice* and *virtue*, if placed to ponderate each other in the scales of Chatterton's true disposition, may be concluded alternately to sink, and alternately to "kick the beam," as the wild sallies of ambitious temper added to, or diminished *their* weight. He was certainly not *vicious* with deliberation, and from deliberation I am sorry to declare, that he appears not to have been *virtuous*. "Great knowledge of men, and of manners," saith Dean Milles,* necessarily must be ascribed to "the author of *Ælla*:" there is in *Ælla* neither "notation of character, nice delineation of nature, nor situations of strong interest," saith our Enquirer, "but such as a young reader might transplant from a thousand modern tragedies:" and a "thousand" who shall hesitate to declare, that Chatterton had read? Here is at once a large field for accusations of plagiarism; yet no precise imitations of "character, nature, or interest,"

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are

* Enquiry, page 87.

are adduced to the support of this argument: This general observation of "our Enquirer" claimed thro' his critical sagacity particular remarks from writers of the drama: yet at once * we are assured, the Boy shewed "amazing intuition, not only in books, but he looked on life with a penetrating eye; his knowledge of the world, his attention to character appears in his numerous satirical pieces;"—as little evincing knowledge in the science of man, as judgment in literary pursuits, writings of his undoubted manufacture had been long since buried in oblivion, had not adventitious circumstances of peculiar situation afforded their obliging support. If, on one hand, it be pronounced improbable, that "ROWLEY dressed up *an ancient* tale with a plot, and fictitious characters;" on the other, is it probable, that the same story should be selected "three centuries" after his existence? and this, because "poetry looks back upon ancient manners with delight!" The period, which had passed between the æra, collected for "Ælla, the old champion of Bristol," and that, in which ROWLEY appeared, surely vindicates, without going farther, such alledged "delight of a poetick mind:" a term of "five centuries" is a far longer than even the *Horatian* date, for "ideas of antiquity."

The

* Enquiry, page 87.

The "sixth branch of enquiry" is distinguished by "a comparison of Chatterton's Poems with those attributed to ROWLEY." To remarks already submitted in the "stictures" on this subject, a single addition will suffice upon *that* adduced by our Enquirer; the inequality of the former, when contrasted with the latter, hath been warmly insisted upon by one party; "the appearance of the same hand in both" is as warmly insisted upon by the other. One solitary instance exhibits itself as a testimony for the sentiments of the latter, a means inadequate to the end proposed: had *more extensive* examples been adduced, the conclusion desired would scarcely have sprung from the premises; that all the pages dispersed through "the miscellanies" passing under the name of "Chatterton," acknowledge him their inventor, it hath not been duly ascertained. "A year and an half" we may recollect the limitation for the first attempt, and final completion of the Poems, ascribed to ROWLEY;" a limitation to the workings of a youth, in whose imagination, *if* arrayed in the most lavish blossoms, scarce a germinating bud of "judicious arrangement" has peeped forth, yet these Poems display in various portions the beauties of a full blown spring. A fair, and unaverted insight into the genuine exertions of human nature will not wantonly endure a violation of her laws by the prepossessions of credulity, and the prejudices of system. "Comparative" passages of an author may be

be brought from his "best, worst, or indifferent" performances; they will be, however, weakly argued, where coincidence of opinion is expected by a deviation from ideas, *determined* in the nature of things: such multifarious eccentricity of devotion to the quill, when an author is reduced to a term of life so scanty, leads unbiaſſed minds to the persuasion, that a whim and frolic of nature has been transfused into the *critick's* brain. The goddess, who sallied "en guerriere, and armed cap-a-pee from the noddle of Jove," is not worthy to be feigned with the *real* exhibitor of *Bristol* intellect, vibrating the harp of Apollo to the voice of every mule "in the eighteenth century. *

"Miscellaneous observations" furnish the "seventh portion" of our Enquirer's reasoning; the Bristol Boy is concerned in their effect, as to the following instance alone: "William the Conqueror is poetically enough described chasing the stag:" here "Chatterton was in his walk of ancient English history."

* With respect to many of the Poems in this Rowleian business, the advocates of the Priest have placed too much to ideas of excellence, those of the Boy, too much, and too little. Where is the epick bard, who hath never been reproached for instances of false taste, and of the bloated sublime? Absurdities in Chatterton's miscellanies may be best "defended" by those who rejoice to wade in the profundity of error: the faults, honestly attributeable to the "author of the Rowleian miscellany," may not be so ingloriously estimated.

history." Must the Poem of "the Tournament" be on this account adjudged to the Bristol Boy? has no prior authority been capable of traversing this walk? What ancient history is evinced, however, by the conduct of this Poem? that William (which of the two Normans it is not positively maintained) "was fond of hunting." A knowledge of this *extraordinary* circumstance subsisting in *extraordinary* times of such royal indulgence, may not be pretended a limitation to the sagacity of the eighteenth century! "We have in another piece an allegorical description of Battayle subdued by Pleasure; in this Chatterton's knowledge of modern imagery appears." I trow *not*; a poet existing in the age of Spencer was adequately qualified to a personification of the passions, and of their consequences; the pencil of allegory hath not been so competently employed in recent periods.

Our Enquirer closes with "the character and circumstances of Chatterton." Why is the Ghost of Shakespeare, or rather his Spirit immortal, conjured up on the occasion? To his "Warwickshire deer-stealer-ship" we may demur; that he was "idle" his compositions confute; that he was "illiterate" his "having small Latin, and no Greek," will by no means attest; that he "aimed at filching" reputation by crooked practices of impudent imposture, he possessed a spirit too great for
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a surmise: Shakespearé was no boy when he composed "Othello."* The Bristol ambitious, set down by the authority of his parent for a perfect dunce, appears pregnant, in a twinkle, with exceeding humor, and riveted to solemnity at the age of twelve years; on a subject indeed, which requires great seriousness of reflection. Chatterton's sister is referred to upon the occasion, but she intimates no syllable of the "apostate Will, possessed," saith our Enquirer, "of a degree of humor, and an ease in versification *astonishing in such a child*:"† but what connection of any specimens, which marked the undisputed originality of Chatterton, with his engagements in the compositions under the name of ROWLEY? His mother satisfies herself with the cool assertion, that before he quitted school, he grew fond of reading: her evidence intimates not a tittle of his performances, though she had herself instructed him in his letters not many years before: He left school at the age of fourteen years, and upwards. The declaration of Lord Oxford's dancing master, that "his Lordship was the greatest dunce at a minuet" introduces another, which many masters of the political dance will not scruple to assert, that he was as considerable a dunce in the *figure* of Administration.

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* Enquiry, p. 103. † Enquiry, p. 104.

Prefumptive testimony is liberally submitted in construction of Chatterton's abilities: that he was of a gloomy character hath been urged by opponents to his disadvantage; by advocates in his favor: stupidity is alledged against him by the first, "his secret solicitation of the muse" by the last.

"Some deem'd him wonderous wise, and
some be liev'd him mad."

His character for veracity hath been asserted by the *troubled* affection of a sister, and ecchoed by one advocate; the same veracity hath been imputed to his pride by another. To "the searcher of hearts" must be resigned a decision of inward thoughts; his creature man most consistently exercises his reason by collecting disposition from conduct; yet he, who hath inured his earlier days to falsehood, may not be supposed but from maturity of years capable to shake off the habitual blemish. "Mr. Walpole never saw Chatterton," yet talks with perfect complacency in favor of the *problamatical*, the paradoxal faculties of his incognito; possessed of this determined good opinion of an humble parish boy, a *little* mind alone would, I am afraid, have been provoked by "peevish answerers" to withhold that patronage, and protection, which few were better able than Mr. Walpole to supply. "His miserable end?" good God! why *flew* not Mr. Walpole to procure him

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a reputable beginning? rescuing him from a tract of hypocrisy, which may not long subsist in a world of intelligence; and is at best the "burial place" for every quality, an ornament to social intercourse.

What Chatterton's mother calls "his growing fond of reading" is at once expressed to "his devotion for study:"* but "quick through the key-hole pops a sprite!" Chatterton "*had access* to the library at Bristol." Here his sister's letter (and she *in course* kept poetick vigils with her brother!) is introduced to prove, that "he set up all night while clerk to Mr. Lambert:" the case of many a foppish clerk to an attorney, tho', it must be confessed, upon a pretence widely different! "blank + slips of refuse or neglected parchments," may not ascertain the "penury of parchment in the days of Edward IV," yet as familiarly as the use of *shreds* is obtained by a gardener from the sweepings of a "bow legged artificer's manufactory, *shreds of parchment* are dexterously conjured up for an argument in support of Chatterton's "Rowlieshyppe." I have some faint recollection (upon this subject) of a *fool's-cap parchment*, of which Mr. Ruddall's testimony instructs me to credit the existence.

Mr. Herbert Croft junior, attentive to the calls of a laborious profession, displays a talent of enquiry into the *business* of poetry :
this

* Enquiry, page 110. † Ibid, page 112.

this author of "love and madness" is a strenuous zealot for the *rights* of our Bristol Urchin. To the *inconclusive* evidence of Mr. Ruddall, already delivered, some considerations are submitted in addition by the favor of the above professional gentleman: a subsidiary occupation which will not confirm much. "Ten pounds," honestly alledged before by Mr. Ruddall to have been a compensation for "the discovery of a fact, hitherto lodged within his own bosom," were forwarded from the pocket of our Councillor to the family of Bristol, through the kind interposition of Mr. Ruddall. Our Councillor esteemed Chatterton's claim to the Poems well founded; so did Mr. Walpole; he appears, however, to have done more than Mr. Walpole; he covertly gave money for information upon the matter; the money was faithfully bestowed, where a larger sum might have been consistently indulged—upon "a family in distress." In one material circumstance alone our Councillor's evidence is enlarged from that of the Pamphleteer, who gives rise to the "Strictures:" the *former* asserts "Mr. Ruddall to have confessed, unless *his* memory *failed him*," *fails him*, and *both failed him* "ever since the day" on which the evidence was communicated, that "he assisted Chatterton in disguising *several* pieces of parchment with the appearance of age, before the account of the Old Bridge appeared in Farley's Journal: this bridge has

the formidable cast to myself, I freely confess, of a "pons asinorum," which I am not sufficient Euclidian to pass. The above addition contains, with respect to Chatterton's authorship of "the Poems attributed to ROWLEY," no direct allegation; for why should not this treachery of parchment be concluded, (an opinion, which our Councillor's own manner of introducing it sufficiently authorizes) to the affair of the "bridge account," and to no other composition whatsoever? but "I will not affront the common sense of my readers, by making farther remarks upon a tale, which speaks for itself!"*

* Enquiry towards the end.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE laughed with the Writer of the Archæological Epistle, and find his innocent Conceits pleasant to Conception, though little reconciling the smallest Change in my Principles, relative to Chatterton's Authorship. I wish a Smile employed to most Purposes, rather than to that of Degradation, where literary Abilities are immediately interested: With political Considerations, I profess myself not to interfere in the present Point.

4 NO 61

F I N I S.

To the lernede DEANE

PERCY:

GRETEYNGE.

PERCY, of Poetes olde, wythe balade clere
Whose precious stories hertes of fere to thawe
Full marvayleouslie flowe wythe Pitie's tere,
Or bende stoute Chivalrie to Cupyde's law,
Thie skylle hathe fetelie wove, great Clerke of fame,
The guerdon swete to sente, ere CHAUCER's tale
Stepede in nature's dewe han rered hys name;
Tyl SPENCER dreste hys Allegorycke vayle;
Thanne to the hygh renome of Anna's daies
Noughte ceafynge tuneful lore, whyles neddere's
byte
Syke bismarelie anoyethe BRUNSWYCKE's praise;
Teachen mie mynde, ne frende of foule despyghte,
To yeven glorie dygne, ne blason guyle;
Ne ROWLIE's shadowe dyghte wythe favoure's
beemie smyle.

Edward Burnaby Greene.

Kensington. March 12, 1782.



For the Westminster Magazine.
F R I E N D S H I P.

By E. B. GREEN, Esq;

CURS'D be the man, whose heart unmov'd
can hear
Vile insult sneaking in the treach'rous sneer;
Wretches delugant with malicious mind
The venial errors nat'ral to mankind;
With greedy thirst th' injurious tale devour,
And vent the lye appointed for the hour.

But doubly curs'd, who hears with patient soul
The strains of calumny and slander roll.
Haste, generous rage, with manly zeal defend
Th' insulted virtues of an *absent friend*:
Pull to their teeth discharge th' avenging flame,
Relound his goodness—and enlarge his fame;
Him from the frowns of scorn indignant free;
The stroke which wounds thy friend—is aim'd
at thee.

This strong exertion—this expanded fire
FRIENDSHIP demands, and FRIENDSHIP
will inspire:
E'en kindling Nature would impatient spring,
To shield a stranger from the viper's sting.

For the Westminster Magazine.
F L A T T E R Y,

By the same.

SHALL FLATTERY lure us with delusive
wiles,
Replete with rancor, tho' she's dress'd in smiles?
A face of sweetness with a heart of gall,
Who knows no virtue, tho' she prates of all?
In silken fetters bind the sons of earth,
And blast the beauties of superior worth?
All, all, alas! to FLATTERY's musick yield,
Kings on the throne and Generals in the field;
The villain's study, and the fool's employ,
The virgin's glory, and the matron's joy.
The young, the old here fix their doating looks,
Fops at their glass, and students at their books;
Whom Reason vainly points with solid plan,
To slide from letters to a glance of man.

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Bereft of conquests, and despoil'd of crown,
Thus honest *Truth* is banish'd with a frown:
So lov'd is Flattery, tho' experience shews
This *friendly serpent* is the worst of foes.

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